

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 03712 081019Z

43

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 SAM-01 OES-03

SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-03 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

SAJ-01 /090 W

----- 035355

R 080800Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4498

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE HONG KONG 3712

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, CH

SUBJ: PRC ANNOUNCES FIRST QUARTER COAL PRODUCTION

REF: HONG KONG 3669

1. BREAKING ITS SILENCE ON COAL PRODUCTION (REFTEL), NCNA ANNOUNCED ON APRIL 7 THAT THE PRC HAD FULFILLED ITS COAL PRODUCTION PLAN FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1975, CLAIMING THAT COAL OUTPUT WAS SIX PERCENT MORE THAN FIRST QUARTER 1974. NCNA ALSO REVEALED THAT LIAONING, THE PRC'S LARGEST COAL PRODUCING PROVINCE, EXCEEDED THE PLAN BY 400,000 TONS, AND THAT DAILY OUTPUT IN MARCH OF MAJOR MINES NATIONWIDE WAS UP FIVE PERCENT OVER JANUARY.

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PAGE 02 HONG K 03712 081019Z

2. IN DISCRIBING A "SPIRIT TF DEFYING HARDSHIP AND

FIGHTING SUCCESSIVE BATTLES", NCNA APPEARS TO ATTRIBUTE MOST OF THE INCREASE TO NON-MATERIAL FACTORS. IT STATES THAT MOST OF THE COAL MINES CONTINUED PRODUCTION DURING THE SPRING FESTIVAL, WITH TWO MILLION MORE TONS OF COAL BEING PRODUCED OVER FIRST QUARTER 1974 BY INCREASING PER UNIT OUTPUT OF THE WORK FACES ALONE.

3. COMING OFF A POOR YEAR IN 1974, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIRST HALF, THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR A COAL PRODUCTION INCREASE IN 1975. (PERHAPS A MORE SIGNIFICANT MEASURE OF PERFORMANCE THAN COMPARISON WITH 1974 IS WHETHER THERE ARE SUCCESSIVE MONTHLY INCREASES DURING 1975.) ALTHOUGH COAL IS CLEARLY A PRIORITY AREA, IN VIEW OF TIGHT CENTER INVESTMENT FUNDS (HK-3204), THERE ARE LIMITS TO HOW FAST THE COAL SECTOR CAN RECOVER IF IT IS FORCED TO CONTINUE TO RELY PREDOMINANTLY ON LOCAL RESOURCES AND NON-MATERIAL INPUTS. A SIGNIFICANT UPTURN IN COAL OUTPUT WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO AWAIT THE LARGE-SCALE OPENINGS OF NEW SHAFTS AND THE HIGHER DEGREE OF MECHANIZATION THAT WOULD COME FROM GREATER INVESTMENT.

CROSS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRODUCTION, COAL, QUARTERLY REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975HONGK03712
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750121-0651
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750472/aaaacnytel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 HONG KONG 3669
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUL 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <10 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRC ANNOUNCES FIRST QUARTER COAL PRODUCTION
TAGS: ENRG, CH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006